CHAPTER XIX

DISPLACEMENT OF JEWISH BY SECULAR EDUCATION

(1) DECREASE OF ILLITERACY

UP to the seventeenth century school education and literacy were the privilege of a comparatively small class consisting of the nobility and gentry, the clergy, the administrative officials, and urban business men. In this period the percentage of people who could read and write was far higher among the Jews than among their non-Jewish neighbours, because this knowledge was required in trade, especially with foreign countries, and in their religious practices. Still, in absolute figures the number of Jewish illiterates, especially women, was high. In Western and Central Europe and in America, thanks to compulsory education, illiterates, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have by now practically disappeared. But in Eastern Europe and the Near East, even now their numbers are considerable, though with the development of the educational systems they are steadily decreasing.

PROPORTION OF ILLITERATES

Country.	Year,	Age.	Jews.	Christians.	Mohammedans.
			Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.

Ukrain	1926	5 years and	30-0	56-6	
Hungar	1920	6 5,	44	16-5	. .
Egypt	1927	5 »	27-3	64-0	88-6
Palesti	19S1	»	13-9	42-3	85-6

Compulsory education brings the Jews increasingly within
the orbit of European civilization. While illiterate, they